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MANAGEMENT OF HIGH COUNTRY CABINS
IN THE
WHITE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST

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District Ranger
Saco Ranger District
White Mountain National Forest

February 17, 1982

DECISION NOTICE

AND

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Management of High Country Cabins in the White Mountain National Forest

In the mid 1930's, six separate, isolated cabins were constructed in the high country of the White Mountain National Forest. Most were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps between 1934 and 1937 and were originally intended to provide shelter for downhill skiers when this sport was first becoming popular in the White Mountains. These six cabins exist now in various states of repair without clear direction for their management. An environmental analysis has been made as the basis for a decision on how each of the backcountry cabins should be managed. This analysis is documented in an Environmental Assessment which is available for public review in the office of the District Ranger at Conway, NH, and the Forest Supervisor's office in Laconia, NH.

Incorporating a considerable number of comments received from the public, the analysis considered the following alternatives for each of the six cabins:

1. No action.
2. Remove the cabin.
3. Increase Forest Service performed maintenance to an acceptable level.
4. Replace the cabin.
5. Place the cabin under a special use permit.
6. Establish a reservation/fee system for use of the cabin.

Considering the condition, setting, history, and use of each site, the alternatives were evaluated in terms of the following criteria:

1. Suitability of the location to provide the desired recreation experience.
2. Public need.
3. Public health and safety.
4. Economic and administrative feasibility of management.
5. Consistency with existing regulations and management directions.

Based on the environmental analysis, I have made the following decisions for each site.

1. Kinsman Cabin - This cabin is located on the Ammonoosuc Ranger District in the town of Easton, adjacent to the Mt. Kinsman Trail, approximately 1½ miles from N.H. Route 116. It is my decision to remove this cabin and rehabilitate the site. My reasons

3 - 2
for this decision include the following: There is no apparent need for a cabin at this location. The cabin is used principally as a party spot and, as a result, suffers frequent vandalism. Major investments of time and money would be required in order to restore it to an acceptable condition.

2. Mt. Cabot Cabin - The Mt. Cabot Cabin is located on the Androscoggin Ranger District in the town of Kilkenny adjacent to the Cabot Trail near the summit of Mt. Cabot. I have decided to retain this cabin and place it under a special use permit if an acceptable permittee is located by January 1, 1983. If this decision cannot be implemented by that time, I have decided to replace the cabin with or convert it into a three-sided trail shelter. This decision is consistent with direction contained in the Kilkenny Unit Plan which identified both a public need for some type of shelter at this location. The cabin is in reasonably good condition and could be maintained at an acceptable standard by a permittee for the next ten years without major investment. If the permit approach is unsuccessful, the high cost of maintaining the facility at this remote site makes it more economical to replace it with a simpler structure that could be maintained at less cost.

3. The Jim Liberty Cabin - This cabin is located just below the tree line on Mt. Chocorua in the town of Albany on the Saco Ranger District. Because the cabin is in good condition, at a manageable location, and is a highly popular feature of the heavily used Mt. Chocorua area, I have decided to retain this cabin under Forest Service maintenance.

4. Black Mountain Cabin - Black Mountain Cabin is located in the town of Jackson on the Saco Ranger District approximately two miles west of the Carter Notch Road via Black Mountain Ski Trail. There is local interest in managing this cabin under a special use permit. The cabin is structurally sound and in good repair. Vandalism and user conflicts are not a major problem. The facility could be maintained in an acceptable condition by a permittee for the next ten years without major investments. Although the permit approach is feasible because of local interest in accepting responsibility for the cabin, there does not appear to be sufficient need for the site to warrant retaining it and spending public funds in maintenance if we are unable to locate an acceptable permittee. If the permit cannot be implemented by January 1, 1983, I have decided that the cabin will be removed and the site restored.

5. North Doublehead Cabin - This cabin is located on the summit of North Doublehead Mountain in the town of Jackson on the Saco Ranger District 1.8 miles from the Dundee Road via the Doublehead Ski Trail. The amount of use this site receives is a clear indication of a public need for the facility. The cabin is in good condition and no major problems are occurring there. Local support for management under special use permit has been identified. It is therefore my decision to attempt to place this facility under special use permit. If this course of action cannot be implemented within one year from the date hereof, the cabin will be retained and managed by the Forest Service. Readers who are familiar with the Black Mountain-North Doublehead area may question the differing management direction for these two sites. The reason why only one of the cabins would be retained if the permit approach is unsuccessful is that there is not sufficient public need to warrant maintaining two cabins in the area with public funds. 1983

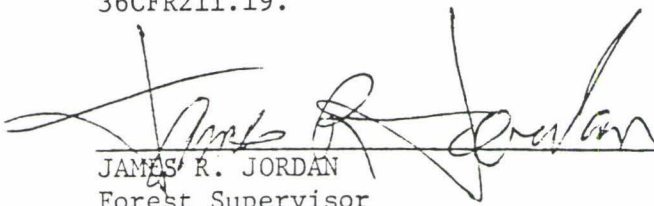
3
6. Mountain Pond Cabin - This site is located near Mountain Pond in the town of Chatham on the Saco Ranger District 1.2 miles from the Slippery Brook Road via the Mountain Pond Trail. Because of its easy accessibility, this site has been used regularly as a party spot and has suffered significant vandalism. User conflicts are common. Because of the condition of the facility and the fact that there is no demonstrated public need for a cabin at this location, it is my decision to remove the cabin and rehabilitate the site.

I have determined, based on the environmental analysis, that my decisions do not constitute a major Federal action that would have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment and, therefore, that an environmental impact statement is not required. This determination was made considering the following factors:

1. The environmental impacts of the decisions are minimal and very localized.
2. The actions to be taken pose no threat to human health and safety.
3. These decisions do not affect flood plains or wetlands.
4. The decisions do not affect any threatened or endangered plant or animal species.
5. The decisions do not involve any significant irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

These decisions may be implemented immediately with the proviso that no cabin shall be significantly modified or destroyed in advance of a determination of its eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The decisions made herein are subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36CFR211.19.


JAMES R. JORDAN
Forest Supervisor

2-11-82
Date

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

January 25, 1982

Management of High Country Cabins

in the

White Mountain National Forest

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Abstract: This Environmental Assessment Report describes six alternatives regarding the management of existing high country cabins in the White Mountain National Forest. The "as is" alternative is one of the alternatives described. The report discusses the estimated effects of implementing each alternative and identifies the Forest Service preferred alternative for each cabin.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background	1
B. Purpose of Report	4
II AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	5
A. Kinsman Cabin	7
B. Mt. Cabot Cabin	8
C. Jim Liberty Cabin	9
D. Black Mountain Cabin	11
E. North Doublehead Cabin	12
F. Mountain Pond Cabin	13
III EVALUATION CRITERIA	15
IV ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED	16
A. No Action	16
B. Remove the Cabin	16
C. Increase Forest Service Performed Maintenance to an Acceptable Level	16
D. Replace the Cabin	17
E. Place Cabin under Special Use Permit	17
F. Establish a Reservation/Fee System for Cabin Use	17
V EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION	17
VI EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES AND IDENTIFICATION OF FOREST SERVICE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	21
VII SUMMARY OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS NEEDED FOR IMPLEMENTATION	31
VIII CONSULTATION WITH OTHERS	38
IX APPENDIX	41
A. Proximity Map	
B. Plans - Kinsman, Black Mountain, Doublehead, and Mountain Pond Cabins	
C. Plans - Jim Liberty Cabin	
D. Plans - Woodshed and Toilet at Kinsman Cabin	
E. Letter Requesting Public Input	

I INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Since the mid-1930's, the White Mountain National Forest has maintained six high country cabins for public use. All but one of these cabins were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Available records state that the cabins were designed primarily to provide shelter for downhill skiers. In most cases, a designated ski trail was located close to the cabins. Proximity Map shown in Appendix A depicts the general location of the cabins.

Kinsman, Black Mountain, Doublehead, and Mountain Pond cabins were erected between 1934 and 1937 according to the plan shown in Appendix B. Native logs were used to build these cabins which had an outside dimension of 25 feet by 17 feet. Stone piers were used for the foundations, wooden floors were laid, and wood shingles were used for the roof. Each of these four cabins (except Kinsman) was originally equipped with eight bunks, two drop-leaf tables, a sink, and a wood stove connected to a stone chimney outside the back wall. Kinsman differed by having only four bunks and one table.

Jim Liberty Cabin was erected in 1934 according to the plan shown in Appendix C. It was built of sturdy wood-frame construction with an enclosed porch. The outside dimension of the cabin was 26 feet by 14 feet. The foundation was made of cut granite which remained from an old guest house that previously occupied the site. Large chains were laid over the cabin and anchored to the ledge to prevent wind damage.

Mt. Cabot Cabin, the smallest of the six high country cabins, is approximately 12 feet by 20 feet. It was built of wood-frame construction with wood shingle siding and roofing. The interior is divided into a bunk room with four bunks and an eating area.

No floor plans or records pertaining to the origin of Mt. Cabot Cabin have been located. Androscoggin District personnel believe it was built by the State of New Hampshire to serve as quarters for the fire tower which was once located on Mt. Cabot. The earliest reference to this tower is the 1917 land status record.

Since the construction of these high country cabins, their use, and that of the Forest in general, has changed significantly. Public use of the Forest in 1935 was only a fraction of what it is today. Commercial alpine ski areas have now been developed

to replace the old downhill ski trails. The evolution of lightweight camping equipment has eliminated the necessity of carrying heavy gear into the forest or relying on permanent shelters.

New and improved roads have increased the accessibility of some of the cabins. Those cabins which are now within 1 or 2 miles of a public road are attracting a high percentage of drinking parties. This practice has led to conflicts between user groups and a high incidence of vandalism. In addition, the "carry in - carry out" litter control campaign has not been accepted by the cabin users to the same degree as it has by other backcountry users.

None of the cabins has been maintained to the same standards as other White Mountain National Forest facilities. There are no operation and maintenance plans in existence for any of them. In addition, the cabins are not being visited on a regularly scheduled basis by Forest Service personnel. The combination of an unmanaged approach to maintenance and abuse by some of the users has led to a general deterioration in the physical condition of the cabins and the recreation experience available.

In spite of these problems, the cabins do represent a part of the history of the Forest and are still receiving a significant amount of use. Public input into this analysis ranged from

recommending removal of all of the cabins to the retention of all of them. The consensus was that the cabins still provide a desirable recreation experience and that at least some of them should be retained.

B. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to determine how each of the six existing cabins should be managed. Several alternatives are available which need to be considered. A separate recommendation will be made for each cabin based on its specific location and the existing management direction.

The Forest Plan (WMNF, 1974) states that cabins with high maintenance costs because of vandalism will be removed. The Forest Plan Addendum (WMNF, 1978) further states that decisions on the future of the cabins should be made on an individual basis relating to the specific situation and location. Only one of the cabins has specifically been addressed in an approved planning document. The Kilkenny Unit Plan (WMNF, 1975) identified the Mt. Cabot Cabin and directed that some type of shelter be retained at that location.

The Activity Review of Dispersed Recreation (WMNF, 1981) identified the following problems associated with the cabins:

1. There are no guidelines interpreting the Forest Plan which set the standards on when maintenance costs become high enough to require removal.
2. The operation cost of the cabins taken from the Recreation Information Management records is \$0.90 per recreation visitor day while the Forest average cost for shelters is \$0.38 per recreation visitor day.
3. The cost of bringing maintenance up to an acceptable level will be high.
4. The present role of cabins in the recreation program has not been clearly defined.
5. Cabins receive a disproportionate amount of vandalism compared to other recreation facilities.

II AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Several statements can be made about the effects on the environment which apply equally to all six cabins. Their effect on the physical environment is relatively minor. The rustic design and the natural wooded settings make them appear very unobtrusive. They occupy an insignificant amount of land, none of which is floodplain, wetlands,

or threatened and endangered species habitat. The cabins do, however, constitute a cultural resource of which a representative sample should be retained.

The effects on the economic and political environment are also minor. No revenue is generated by the cabins and contributions to the local economy by their users are insignificant. Although the public is interested in the management of the cabins, the final decision is not expected to be a politically sensitive issue.

For half a century the cabins have affected the social environment. They continue to be popular with the using public even though the original purpose of accommodating downhill skiers is no longer occurring. The primary uses today consist of (1) headquarters for an extended stay in the area; (2) outings for scouts and other organized groups; (3) cross-country skiing; (4) limited amounts of winter camping; and (5) destinations for undisturbed parties. Some of this use has led to abuse of the cabins and conflicts between users. None of the existing cabins can be considered essential for public safety, even though they may occasionally serve as havens from inclement weather.

Each cabin has its own unique characteristics related to its location, condition, and patterns of use. The following is a detailed description of each one.

A. Kinsman Cabin

This cabin is located on the Ammonoosuc Ranger District within the Town of Easton. The Mt. Kinsman Trail, previously known as the Kinsman Ski Trail, passes within 100 feet of the cabin. The records state that this cabin was constructed to accommodate winter ski use.

The cabin is located in a wooded setting approximately 1½ miles from NH Route 116. The trail to the cabin has a moderate grade and can be hiked in 1 hour or less. The easy access has made the cabin an attractive location for undisturbed parties. This practice has led to abuse of the cabin and some social conflicts between user groups.

The nearest source of water is a stream about 200 feet downhill from the cabin. The original pit toilet and woodshed complex is located about 75 feet from the cabin. Firewood is no longer provided in the woodshed and the toilet is socially and environmentally unacceptable. Plans for the woodshed and toilet are shown in Appendix D.

Kinsman Cabin is run-down and has been extensively vandalized. The floor is sagging and has been patched with sheet metal in several places. The glass in all of the windows has been broken and the windows are now covered with plastic. The roof

is covered with old wood shingles which could be the originals. The original stone chimney which pulled away from the cabin has been removed and the stove and stovepipe furnished at a later date are now gone. Users of the cabin have fashioned a makeshift fireplace which has scorched one wall and the floor and blackened the cabin's interior. The cabin has also been extensively damaged by carving, chopping, and graffiti.

Past maintenance has not kept up with the vandalism which continually occurs at Kinsman Cabin. Major expenditures would be needed to restore it to an acceptable condition.

B. Mt. Cabot Cabin

This cabin is located on the Androscoggin Ranger District within the Town of Kilkenny. It is situated adjacent to the Cabot Trail near the summit of Mt. Cabot.

The Bunnell Brook Trail serves as the primary access to the Cabot Trail and the cabin. It requires about 3 hours of moderately strenuous hiking to reach the cabin which is surrounded by a low spruce-fir forest. Excellent panoramic views are available from a vantage point about 100 feet from the cabin.

Mt. Cabot is a popular destination since it is one of the "4,000 footers." A visitor log maintained at the cabin indicates a significant amount of visits by the hiking public. Numerous comments in the log expressed appreciation for the cabin's presence and condition.

There are no toilet facilities or developed water supplies provided at the cabin. The nearest water source is a stream approximately 1.5 miles away.

The cabin appears to be structurally sound and in a good state of repair. In recent years, some maintenance of the cabin has been performed by a local Scout Troop. They have expressed an interest in continuing to care for the cabin under a Special Use Permit.

C. Jim Liberty Cabin

Jim Liberty Cabin is located just below tree line on Mt. Chocorua in the Town of Albany on the Saco Ranger District. The site was first occupied in 1891 by a privately owned, two-story guest house which blew down in 1915. In 1924, the Chocorua Mountain Club constructed a shelter on the same location. It was destroyed in a 1932 windstorm. The Forest Service replaced the shelter with the present cabin in 1934. The records state that the cabin and two adjacent ski trails were built to serve "down

mountain" skiing enthusiasts. The ski trails have since been abandoned and revegetated.

The cabin is located in a small opening surrounded by spruce-fir forest. The rocky summit of Mt. Chocorua forms an impressive backdrop for the cabin. Vast panoramic views to the east, south, and west are available from the site.

Mt. Chocorua has become one of the most popular one day hikes on the White Mountain National Forest with a network of trails serving the area. Jim Liberty Cabin can be reached by several of these trails. A typical hike to the cabin would take $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, cover $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and be moderately strenuous in nature.

Two acceptable "outhouse" type pit toilets are located 300 feet from the cabin. Water can usually be obtained from a small open stream about 0.2 mile from the cabin; however, it is not always available during dry periods.

Jim Liberty Cabin was completely refurbished by the Forest Service in 1974 and a new stove was installed in 1979. The interior walls are now covered with graffiti but physical damage is minimal. The minor amount of vandalism is currently being corrected through routine maintenance. Overall, the cabin is structurally sound and in good condition. No major repairs should be needed in the next 10 years.

D. Black Mountain Cabin

This cabin is located in the Town of Jackson on the Saco Ranger District. Approaching from the east, it is approximately 2 miles from the Carter Notch Road to the cabin via the Black Mountain Ski Trail. This trail is infrequently used for skiing now due to its steep grade.

The cabin may also be reached from the south by the East Pasture Trail. In addition to hiking, this trail is currently being maintained by the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation for cross-country skiing. It is approximately 2.3 miles from the trail-head to the cabin via this trail. Most of the trail is moderately easy to hike and ski.

The cabin is located in a densely wooded area a few hundred feet below the summit of Black Mountain. At the time of construction, a panoramic view was available from the front door of the cabin. Today, the view has been obscured by growth of the surrounding forest. This condition makes the cabin seem dark and uninviting.

An enclosed pit toilet is located about 300 feet from the cabin. It is situated on suitable soils and is adequate to meet the needs of the cabin users; however, the plywood sheathing on the toilet has been damaged by porcupines.

There is no developed water supply at the cabin. An unreliable spring is located 200 yards downhill. The only reliable water is a spring which lies over the crest of the mountain, a distance of about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

Black Mountain Cabin was completely refurbished by the Forest Service in the mid-1970's. This work included a new roof, floor, sill logs, interior dividers, doors, and bunks. The old woodshed was removed at this time because it had become a garbage collector. In 1979, a new cast iron stove was installed in the cabin.

This cabin is still structurally sound and in generally good condition. The interior is decorated by the usual carving and graffiti and one bunk has been chewed by porcupines; however, there is no significant damage. No major repairs are expected to be needed in the next 10 years.

E. North Doublehead Cabin

This cabin is located on the summit of North Doublehead Mountain in the Town of Jackson on the Saco Ranger District. It is 1.8 miles from the Dundee Road to the cabin via the Doublehead Ski Trail. The steep ascent of the trail requires that a hiker must be in good physical condition to reach the cabin. Only the most advanced skiers can safely ski this trail.

The cabin is located in a small opening which is surrounded by spruce-fir forest. Nearby vantage points provide some excellent panoramic views. The physical setting of the cabin is very attractive.

An enclosed pit toilet is provided near the cabin. The soils are suitable and it adequately meets the needs of the cabin users. The nearest water supply is a brook about 1 mile downhill from the cabin.

In 1972, a new roof was installed on the cabin by a group of volunteers. A few years later, the Forest Service completed the refurbishing by installing new sill logs, floor, doors, and interior walls. The old woodshed was removed at this time. In 1979, a new cast iron stove was installed.

Doublehead Cabin is structurally sound and in generally good condition, even though the interior has the usual carving and graffiti. Regular maintenance should meet the needs of this cabin for the next 10 years without major expenditures.

F. Mountain Pond Cabin

This cabin is located near Mountain Pond in the Town of Chatham on the Saco Ranger District. It is 1.2 miles from Slippery Brook Road to the cabin via the Mountain Pond Trail.

This trail is nearly flat and can be walked in 30 to 40 minutes. The easy access has made this cabin an attractive destination for undisturbed parties. This practice has led to abuse of the cabin and user conflicts. Some Forest users have reported feeling threatened by groups that they encountered at this cabin.

Mountain Pond is a scenic pond located at 1500 feet elevation. Due to its easy access and scenic qualities, the area is very popular for fishing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and skiing. The cabin is located in a small opening on the south shore with a nice view of Baldface Mountain across the pond. Unfortunately, much of the vegetation around the cabin has been cut for firewood.

A toilet is located about 200 feet from the cabin. Due to poor soil conditions, this toilet is situated over a 55-gallon drum rather than the usual pit. The drum must be removed and transported to a disposal site annually. This can only be done when snow conditions are good enough to support a snowmobile and sled.

A dug well equipped with a pitcher pump has been provided near the cabin. The well is lined with stone and protected with a wooden cover. It has been signed as an untested water supply.

The Forest Service made major repairs to the cabin in the mid-1970's. This work included a new floor, sill logs, doors, interior walls, and bunks. The original woodshed was removed at this time to prevent it from being used as a garbage bin. In 1979, a new cast iron stove was installed in the cabin.

Despite the above work the cabin is in poor condition today. The identified problems are (1) a leaky roof; (2) crumbling foundation; (3) sagging floor; (4) missing carrying-timber; (5) two windows, including sash and frames, broken and boarded up; (6) numerous bullet holes; and (7) miscellaneous damage to window panes, bunks, walls, stove, and stovepipe.

Routine maintenance has not kept up with the vandalism which continually occurs at Mountain Pond Cabin. Major expenditures would be needed to restore it to an acceptable condition.

III EVALUATION CRITERIA

The alternatives considered will be evaluated by how well they meet the following criteria. These criteria were derived through a consideration of existing plans, administrative reviews, management concerns, and public input.

- A. Facility is in a suitable location to provide the desired recreation experience.

- B. Facility satisfies the public need.
- C. Facility meets health and safety requirements.
- D. Facility is economically and administratively feasible to manage.
- E. Recommendation is consistent with existing regulations and management direction.

IV ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The following alternatives are considered for each of the six cabins.

A. No Action

This is the "as is" alternative. All six cabins would remain in place and the White Mountain National Forest would continue to manage them in the same manner as in the past.

B. Remove the Cabin

The cabin and related facilities would be removed and the site restored to its natural condition.

C. Increase Forest Service Performed Maintenance to an Acceptable Level

Under this alternative, operation and maintenance standards would be identified and adhered to. Existing deficiencies would be corrected.

D. Replace the Cabin

At selected sites a different type of facility would be provided such as a three-sided shelter or tent platforms.

E. Place Cabin under Special Use Permit

A willing cooperator would be issued a Special Use Permit for maintenance of a cabin. The cabin would still be available for use by the general public.

F. Establish a Reservation/Fee System for Cabin Use

A reservation and fee system would be established for use of selected cabins.

V EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION

A. No Action

This alternative would perpetuate the existing condition. All six cabins would continue to be operated without clear direction

as to their role or management. Those cabins which are in poor condition would continue to deteriorate. Abuse of the cabins and potentially serious user conflicts would continue to occur at Kinsman and Mountain Pond. The inadequate toilet facilities at Mt. Cabot, Kinsman, and Mountain Pond Cabins would also not be addressed.

B. Remove the Cabin

Under this alternative, a selected cabin and its related facilities would be removed and the site restored to its natural condition. This would eliminate the problems associated with human waste disposal, vandalism, and user conflicts. A net dollar savings to the public would result from the reduced maintenance requirements on the Forest. There would also be a reduction in the amount of this type of recreation experience available to the public.

C. Increase Maintenance to an Acceptable Level

Implementation of this alternative at a selected cabin would retain and improve the recreation experience currently available to the public. Standards of maintenance would be established and plans developed to meet those standards. Regularly scheduled inspection trips would be performed. Emphasis would be given to

managing the facility and reducing its susceptibility to vandalism.

A poorly maintained cabin would be rehabilitated to an acceptable condition. Socially and environmentally acceptable toilet facilities would be provided at the site.

Selection of this alternative would not eliminate the opportunities for vandalism and the potential for user conflicts.

These problems would continue to exist, particularly at Kinsman and Mountain Pond Cabins which are easily accessible. Maintenance costs at these cabins would be very high.

D. Replace the Cabin

Under this alternative a selected cabin would be replaced with or converted into a different type of facility such as a three-sided shelter or tent platforms. This would reduce maintenance costs while retaining public services; however, it would provide a different type of recreation experience. Opportunities for vandalism and the potential for user conflicts would be reduced. The initial cost of implementing this alternative would be high since new facilities would have to be built; however, the long term effect would be a reduction in maintenance costs.

E. Place Cabin under Special Use Permit

Under this alternative, a selected cabin would be maintained to an acceptable standard by a permittee. This would retain the type and level of recreation experience currently available at the site. Direct cost to the public would be reduced since the permittee would be performing the required maintenance.

Problems associated with human waste disposal at Kinsman, Mt. Cabot, and Mountain Pond Cabins would still exist unless new toilet facilities were built. In addition, the opportunities for vandalism and the potential for user conflicts at the easily accessible cabins would not be eliminated. Under this alternative, the Forest Service would have to assume additional administrative responsibilities to assure compliance with the terms of the Special Use Permit.

F. Establish a Reservation and Fee System

The tighter controls imposed by this action would reduce opportunities for vandalism and the potential for user conflicts. Reservation holders would be guaranteed use of a cabin in advance; however, the selected cabin would no longer be available for general use by the public. Users could no longer rely on the cabin being available for lunch breaks, rest stops, and overnight shelter unless they had a reservation.

Administration of a reservation and fee system would be difficult. Potential users would have to be notified prior to their arrival. Since most of the cabins are accessible from more than one direction, a full-time attendant could be needed at the cabin to control and monitor the system. Past experience on the White Mountain National Forest indicates that the cost of implementing and administering a reservation/fee system could exceed the benefits derived from it.

VI EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES AND IDENTIFICATION OF FOREST SERVICE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

This analysis was limited to the six existing high country cabins on the White Mountain National Forest. The evaluation criteria were applied to each cabin on an individual basis relating to its specific situation and location. Based on this analysis, a preferred alternative has been identified for each cabin.

A. Kinsman Cabin

The no action alternative was rejected because it does not address the many problems which currently exist at this cabin. Replacing the cabin with another type of facility was rejected because there is no clearly defined need for a developed site at this location. The alternatives of increasing maintenance, issuing a Special Use Permit and establishing a reservation/fee

system were all rejected due to the high initial cost, estimated at \$6,720, of returning the cabin to an acceptable standard. An estimated expenditure of \$2,940 per year would be needed to maintain this cabin in an acceptable standard. In addition, none of the preceding alternatives would eliminate the vandalism and user conflicts currently occurring at the cabin.

The preferred alternative is to remove the cabin and rehabilitate the site. No clear need or public demand for this cabin can be established. Its easy accessibility has made it an attractive party spot and a frequent victim of vandalism. Major investments of time and money would be required if an attempt were to be made to restore it to an acceptable condition and to keep it that way. This action will resolve an administrative and maintenance problem and result in a net savings to the public.

Implementation of this action will require an evaluation of the cabin's historical value prior to its removal. Once clearance is received, the cabin, woodshed, and toilet building should be disposed of in accordance with existing Forest Service Manual direction and the site restored to a natural condition. It will also be necessary to inform the using public of the action which has been taken. The estimated cost of implementing the preferred alternative is \$2,820.

B. Mt. Cabot Cabin


The no action alternative was rejected because it does not address the maintenance needs or the problems of human waste disposal at this site. Removal of the cabin and rehabilitation of the site could not be considered because the Kilkenny Unit Plan specifies that some type of shelter will be provided at this site. Increasing Forest Service performed maintenance was considered and rejected due to the costs, estimated at \$1,020 per year, associated with this remote location. Establishing a reservation/fee system was considered and rejected due to the problems of administering such a program.

The preferred alternative is to place this cabin under Special Use Permit by January 1, 1983. Vandalism and user conflicts are not major problems at this facility. The cabin is in reasonably good condition, satisfies an identified public need, and could be maintained to an acceptable standard by a permittee for the next 10 years without major repairs. Local support for this course of action has been identified through this analysis and the Kilkenny Unit Plan.

Implementation of this alternative will require the identification of a willing and capable permittee and the issuance of a Special Use Permit. The permittee and the Forest Service must agree on the acceptable standards of maintenance to be applied

to the cabin. It will also be necessary for the permittee and the Forest Service to work together to locate and construct a socially and environmentally acceptable toilet facility. It is estimated that issuing the Special Use Permit will cost \$430 and that \$210 will be needed annually to administer it.

Should the Special Use Permit approach prove unsuccessful then the preferred alternative would be to replace the cabin with or convert it into a three-sided shelter. Maintenance of this type of facility would still provide services to the public, as specified in the Kilkenny Unit Plan, but at a much reduced cost.



Implementation of this alternative would require an historical evaluation of the cabin prior to its removal or modification. It would also be necessary under this action to locate and construct an acceptable toilet facility.

C. Jim Liberty Cabin

The no action alternative was not selected because it does not address the role and the maintenance needs of this cabin. Removing the cabin or replacing it with a different facility were both considered but rejected because the cabin is in good condition and is in a suitable location for this type of recreation experience. Establishing a reservation/fee system was not

selected because it would be difficult and expensive to administer at this site. Placing the cabin under Special Use Permit was not selected because no interest in this approach has been identified.

The preferred alternative is to retain this cabin and establish Forest Service maintenance at an acceptable level. This cabin has become a part of the history of the Mt. Chocorua area. Its location, condition, and high level of demand make it a desirable facility to retain for public use and historical interpretation. Regularly scheduled maintenance and inspection trips should attain the desired standards for the next 10 years without major investments.

Implementation of this action will require the development and adherence to an operation and maintenance plan. Plans should also be made to interpret the history of the site. Financing needs for these actions should be included in the program development and budgeting process. An estimated \$2,520 per year will be needed to carry out this action.

D. Black Mountain Cabin

The no action alternative was rejected because it does not address maintenance requirements or the need for this facility. Increasing Forest Service maintenance was not selected because

the low use of this facility does not justify the expenditure of significant amounts of public funds for its maintenance. Replacing the cabin with another type of facility was rejected because there is no clearly defined need for a developed site at this location. Establishing a reservation/fee system was not selected because the costs of administering the system could exceed the benefits.

The preferred alternative is to place this cabin under Special Use Permit by January 1, 1983. Even though the public need for this cabin is low, that need could be satisfied through this approach without significant cost to the public or conflict with other management goals. The cabin is structurally sound and in good repair. Vandalism and user conflicts are not a major problem. The facility could be maintained to an acceptable condition by a permittee for the next 10 years without major repairs. Local support for this course of action has been identified.

Implementation of this alternative will require the identification of a willing and capable permittee and the issuance of a Special Use Permit. The permittee and the Forest Service must agree on the acceptable standards of maintenance to be applied to the cabin. The Forest Service and the Permittee should work together to thin out the trees surrounding the cabin to make it

a more attractive site. The Special Use Permit is estimated to cost \$430 to issue and \$210 per year to administer.

Should the Special Use Permit approach prove to be unsuccessful, the preferred alternative would be to remove the cabin and rehabilitate the site. The public demand or need for this cabin is not great enough to justify the expenditure of significant amounts of public funds on the facility.

Implementation of this alternative would require an evaluation of the cabin's historical value prior to its removal. Once clearance was received, the cabin should be disposed of in accordance with existing Forest Service Manual direction. The site should also be restored to a natural condition and the public informed of the action taken. Disposal would cost an estimated \$2,820 to accomplish.

E. North Doublehead Cabin

The no action alternative was rejected because it does not address the long term management of this cabin. Removal or replacement with a different facility were both rejected because the cabin is in a suitable location for this type of recreation experience, is satisfying an identified public need, is in good condition, and no major problems are occurring there. Establishing a reservation/fee system was not selected because

the costs associated with such a system could exceed the benefits.

The preferred alternative is to place this cabin under Special Use Permit by January 1, 1983. This cabin could be maintained to an acceptable standard by a permittee for the next 10 years without major repairs. Local support for this course of action has been identified.

Implementation of this alternative would require the identification of a willing and capable permittee and the issuance of a Special Use Permit. The permittee and the Forest Service must agree on the standards of maintenance to be applied to the cabin. The Special Use Permit is estimated to cost \$430 to issue and \$210 to administer.

Should the Special Use Permit approach prove to be unsuccessful, the preferred alternative would be to increase Forest Service maintenance to an acceptable level. The cabin is situated in a desirable location for this type of recreation experience and vandalism and user conflicts have not been significant problems. The cabin is structurally sound and in good condition. Application of a managed operation and maintenance plan should keep the cabin in acceptable condition for the next 10 years without major expenditures.

Implementation of this alternative would require the development and adherence to an operation and maintenance plan for the cabin. The history of the cabin should also be interpreted at the site. Financing needs for these actions should be included in the program development and budgeting process. This alternative would require an estimated \$1,020 per year to perform the needed maintenance.

F. Mountain Pond Cabin

The no action alternative was rejected because it does not address the many problems which currently exist at this cabin. Replacing the cabin with another type of facility was rejected because there is no clearly defined, legitimate public need for a developed site at this location. The alternatives of increasing maintenance, issuing a Special Use Permit, and establishing a reservation/fee system were all rejected due to the high initial cost, estimated at \$6,380, of returning the cabin to an acceptable condition. In addition, none of the preceding alternatives would eliminate the vandalism and user conflicts currently occurring at the cabin. An estimated expenditure of \$2,940 per year would be needed to maintain this cabin in an acceptable standard.

The preferred alternative is to remove the cabin and rehabilitate the site. This cabin is not in a suitable location since

it is within about 1 mile of the Slippery Brook Road. This easy access has made it an attractive party spot and a frequent victim of vandalism. The cabin is currently in poor condition both structurally and cosmetically. Major investments of time and money would be required if an attempt were to be made to restore it to an acceptable condition and keep it that way.

Mountain Pond is primarily a day use area due to its easy access. An existing three-sided shelter will remain on the north side of the pond opposite the current cabin site. No justification can be made for retaining the cabin as well as the shelter. Removal of the cabin will resolve an administrative and maintenance problem of long standing and result in a net savings to the public.

Implementation of this action will require an evaluation of the cabin's historical value prior to its disposal. Once clearance is received the cabin and toilet building should be disposed of in accordance with existing Forest Service Manual direction. The well should be filled in and the entire site restored to a natural condition. The public should be informed of this action once it is carried out. Disposal of the cabin and restoration of the site is estimated to cost \$2,820.

VII SUMMARY OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS NEEDED
FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A. Kinsman Cabin

The preferred alternative is to remove the cabin and restore the site to a natural condition. Management actions needed for implementation are:

1. Determine the historical value of the cabin and obtain the necessary clearance prior to disposal.
2. Dispose of the cabin, woodshed, and toilet in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Real Property Section of the Forest Service Manual.
3. Dispose of all debris by burning, burial, scattering, or removal as appropriate.
4. Seed and/or plant the site to restore it to a natural condition.
5. Issue a news release immediately upon removal of the cabin.
6. Remove all informational signs referring to the cabin.

7. Post public notices at the trailhead and local information stations for 2 years following removal.
8. Camouflage the side trail to the cabin site and monitor and manage the area to insure proper rehabilitation.
9. Correct maps and other printed materials as opportunities arise.

B. Mt. Cabot Cabin

The preferred alternative is to achieve volunteer maintenance through the issuance of a Special Use Permit. Should this approach prove unsuccessful the preferred alternative is to replace the cabin with a three-sided shelter. Management actions needed for implementation are:

1. Identify a group willing and capable of performing volunteer maintenance.
2. Issue a Special Use Permit by January 1, 1983. Items to include are:
 - a. Standards of acceptable maintenance
 - b. Maintenance schedules
 - c. Inspection schedules

- d. Amenities to be provided
 - e. Signing requirements
3. Work with permittee to locate and construct a socially and environmentally acceptable toilet facility.
 4. Establish a method of measuring use.
 5. Replace the cabin with or convert it into a three-sided shelter if the Special Use Permit approach proves unsuccessful. Should replacement be decided upon, the existing cabin should be disposed of in accordance with the management actions as outlined in Items 1-9 for the previously described Kinsman Cabin.
 6. Include financing needs in program development and budgeting process.

C. Jim Liberty Cabin

The preferred alternative is to increase Forest Service maintenance to an acceptable level. Required management actions are:

1. Develop an operation and maintenance plan. Items to include are:

- a. Standards of acceptable maintenance
 - b. Maintenance schedules
 - c. Inspection schedules
 - d. Amenities to be provided
 - e. Signing requirements
2. Establish a method for measuring use.
 3. Interpret the history of the site.
 4. Include financing needs in program development and budgeting process.

D. Black Mountain Cabin

The preferred alternative is to issue a Special Use Permit to a reliable permittee for maintenance of the cabin. Should this approach prove unsuccessful then the preferred alternative is to remove the cabin and rehabilitate the site. Management actions needed for implementation are:

1. Identify a group willing and capable of performing volunteer maintenance.
2. Issue a Special Use Permit by January 1, 1983. Items to include are:

- a. Standards of acceptable maintenance
 - b. Maintenance schedules
 - c. Inspection schedules
 - d. Amenities to be provided
 - e. Signing requirements
3. Establish a method of measuring use.
4. Daylight the cabin by thinning the surrounding timber. White Mountain National Forest personnel should remove the timber or designate it for removal by the permittee.
5. Include financing needs in program development and budgeting process.
6. Dispose of the cabin by applying the same management actions as outlined in Items 1-9 for the previously described Kinsman Cabin if the Special Use Permit approach proves unsuccessful.

E. North Doublehead Cabin

The preferred alternative is to issue a Special Use Permit to a reliable permittee for maintenance of the cabin. Should this approach prove unsuccessful, the preferred alternative would be

to increase Forest Service maintenance to an acceptable level.

The required management actions are:

1. Identify a group willing and capable of performing volunteer maintenance.
2. Issue a Special Use Permit by January 1, 1983. Items to include are:
 - a. Standards of acceptable maintenance
 - b. Maintenance schedules
 - c. Inspection schedules
 - d. Amenities to be provided
 - e. Signing requirements
3. Establish a method of measuring use.
4. Develop an operation and maintenance plan for Forest Service maintenance if the Special Use Permit approach proves unsuccessful. Apply the same management actions as outlined in Items 1-5 for the previously described Jim Liberty Cabin.

F. Mountain Pond Cabin

The preferred alternative is to remove the cabin and rehabilitate the site. Management actions needed for implementation are:

1. Determine the historical value of the cabin and obtain the necessary clearance prior to disposal.
2. Dispose of the cabin and toilet in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Real Property Section of the Forest Service Manual.
3. Dispose of all debris by burning, burial, scattering, or removal as appropriate.
4. Remove the pump and fill in the well.
5. Seed and/or plant the site to restore it to a natural condition.
6. Issue a news release immediately upon removal of the cabin.
7. Remove all informational signs referring to the cabin.

8. Post public notices at trailheads and local information stations for two years following removal.
9. Correct maps and other printed materials as opportunities arise.
10. Monitor and manage the site to insure proper rehabilitation.

VIII CONSULTATION WITH OTHERS

A formal request for input to this analysis was sent to approximately 20 interested groups and individuals as well as numerous Forest Service personnel. Twenty-five written responses were received as a result of this request. Additional information was obtained through personal contacts, on-site inspections of the cabins, and a review of pertinent written material. The following is a summary of these sources of information:

A. Written Response Received

1. Anne and Steve Frost, Jackson, NH
2. Board of Selectmen, Chatham, NH
3. The Nature Conservancy
4. David Pratt III, Assistant Ranger, Saco Ranger District
5. Don Marks, Forester, Saco Ranger District

6. Paul Shaw, District Ranger, Ammonoosuc Ranger District
7. Quentin Mack, Assistant Ranger, Saco Ranger District
8. Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
9. Ed French, Owner, Bear Paw Timber Company
10. Gary Carr, District Ranger, Androscoggin Ranger District
11. Lynn Stevens, Topsfield, MA
12. Howard Hatch, Forestry Technician, Saco Ranger District
13. Chet Russell, Forestry Technician, Saco Ranger District
14. Rick Young, Forestry Technician, Saco Ranger District
15. Andrew Hartford, Georgia-Pacific Corporation
16. Betty Whitney, Jackson, NH
17. Board of Selectmen, Town of Easton, NH
18. John Kenney, Franconia, NH
19. William Nichols, Littleton, NH
20. Rev. Carlton Schaller, Jr., Littleton, NH
21. John B. Pepper, Jackson, NH
22. Bob Smith, Forestry Technician, Saco Ranger District
23. Kim R. Perry, BSA Troop 218, Jefferson, NH
24. Appalachian Mountain Club
25. Burm Garland, Vice-President, Woodlands, Saunders Brothers

B. Personal Contacts

1. Thomas Perkins, Executive Director, Jackson Ski Touring Foundation
2. Billee Hoornbeek, Archeologist, White Mountain National Forest
3. Ray Leonard, Recreation Research, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station
4. Jim Jordan, Forest Supervisor, White Mountain National Forest
5. Ray Orlauskis, Assistant Ranger, Androscoggin Ranger District
6. Roger Collins, Forestry Technician, Ammonoosuc Ranger District
7. Homer Emery, Forestry Technician, Saco Ranger District
8. Earl Niewald, Recreation Staff Officer, White Mountain National Forest
9. Dick Pierce, Lands, Soils, Water, and NEPA, Staff Officer, White Mountain National Forest
10. Ned Therrien, Information Officer, White Mountain National Forest

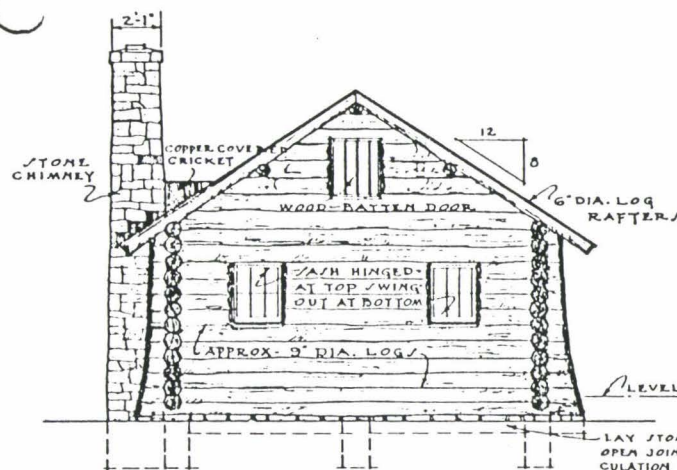
C. Written Material Reviewed

1. Dispersed Recreation Activity Review, White Mountain National Forest, 1981
2. Dispersed Recreation Addendum, Forest Plan, White Mountain National Forest, 1978

3. Forest Plan, White Mountain National Forest, 1974
4. Forest Service Manual, Section 2300
5. Forest Service Manual, Section 2700
6. Forest Service Manual, Section 6400
7. Forest Service Records
8. The Forest Service Recreation Forum, American Ski Federation
9. Kilkenny Unit Plan, White Mountain National Forest, 1975
10. Recreation Information Management Records
11. The Register, A Newsletter of the Appalachian Trail,
November 1981

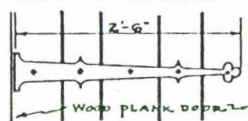
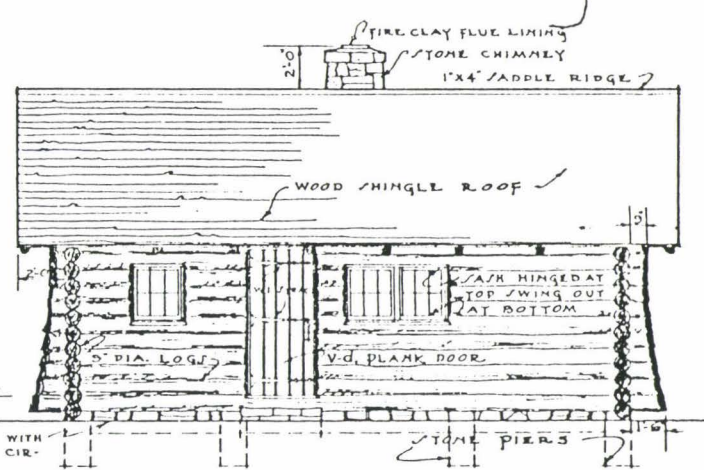
IX APPENDIX

- A. Proximity Map
- B. Plans - Kinsman, Black Mountain, Doublehead, and Mountain Pond
Cabins
- C. Plans - Jim Liberty Cabin
- D. Plans - Woodshed and Toilet at Kinsman Cabin
- E. Letter Requesting Public Input

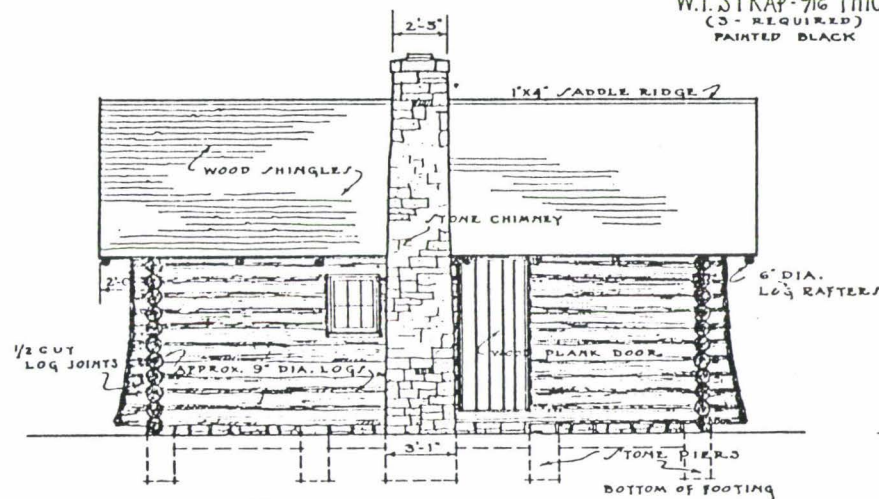


END ELEVATION.

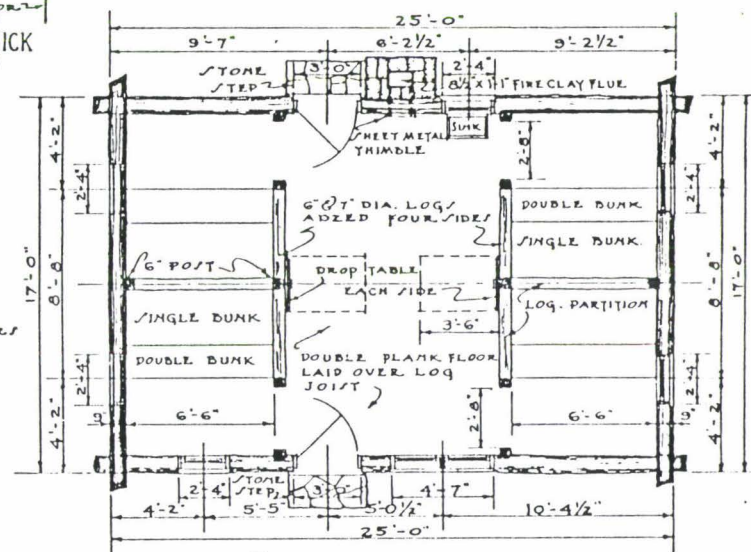
OPPOSITE END SIMILAR.

W.I. STRAP $\frac{3}{16}$ THICK
(3 - REQUIRED)
PAINTED BLACK

FRONT ELEVATION.



REAR ELEVATION.

Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'-0"

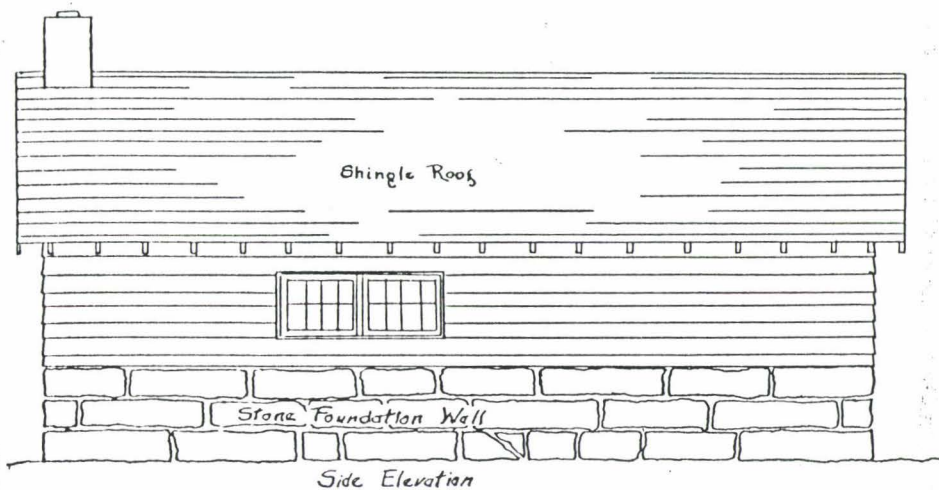
FLOOR PLAN.

NOTE: SIZES GIVEN FOR LOGS ARE APPROXIMATE, AND ARE GIVEN FOR THE CENTER OF SPANS. SLIGHT VARIATIONS FROM DIMENSIONS WILL BE PERMITTED.

- STONE PIERS SHALL REST ON FIRM EARTH A MINIMUM OF 6" BELOW THE FROST LINE.
- STONE WALLS BETWEEN PIERS SHALL BE LAID UP OF LARGE LOOSE STONE PERMITTING AIR CIRCULATION UNDER FLOOR.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
HIGH COUNTRY CABIN.

DESIGNED C.B.M. & L.C.M. DRAWN L.C.M.
CHECKED L.C.M. & R.D.B. TRACED LTD.
APPROVED R.M.R. DATE 3/14/35
Regional Forester
SHEET 1 OF 6 Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'-0"

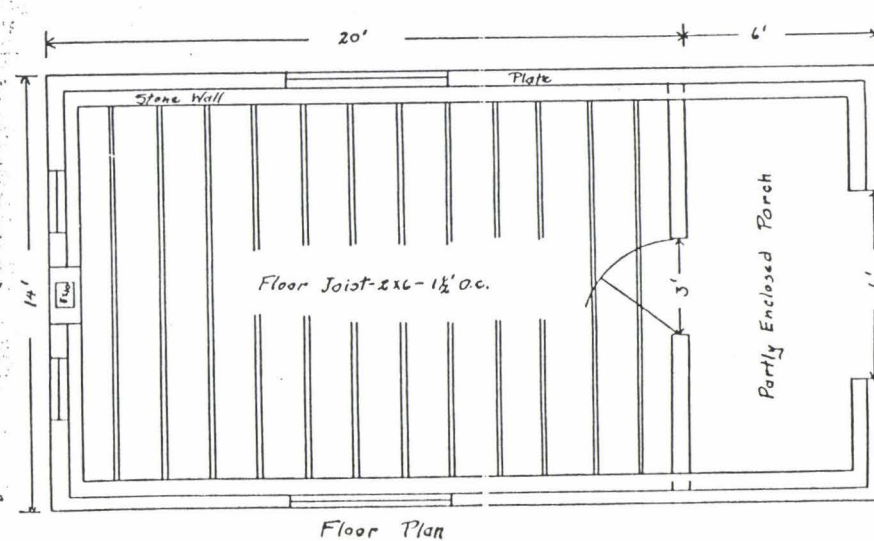
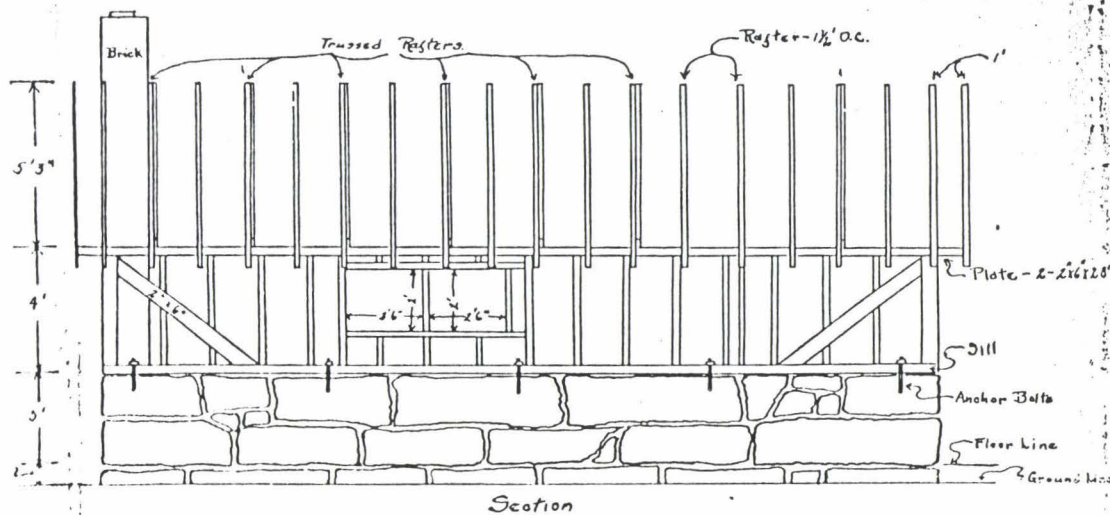


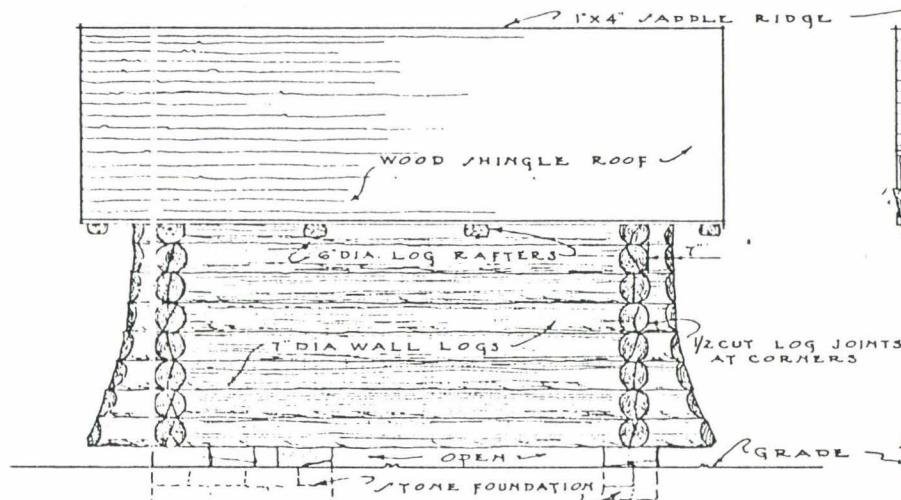
WHITE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST

PLAN OF

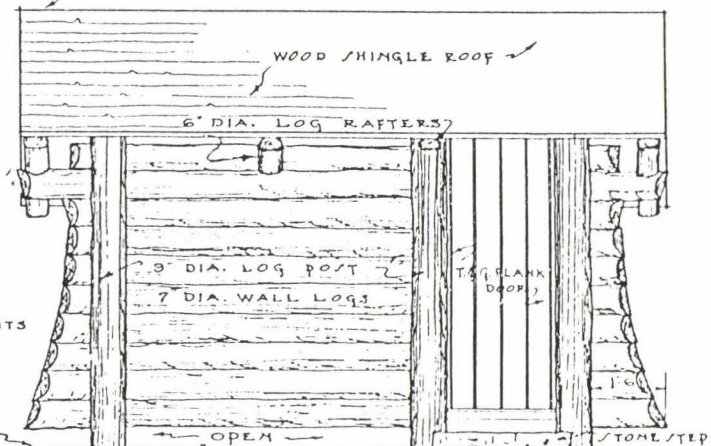
JIM LIBERTY SHELTER

SCALE - 1" = 48"

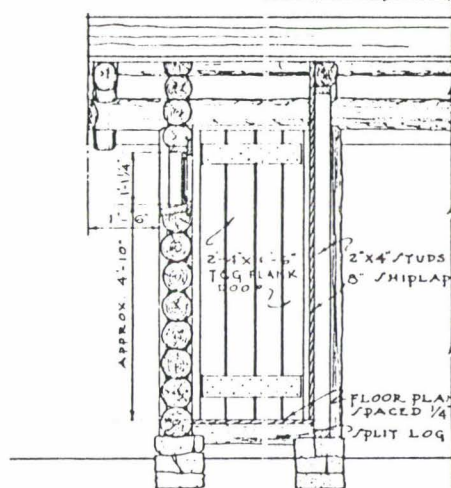




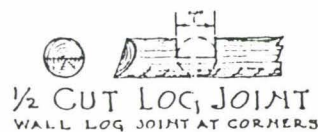
REAR ELEVATION X



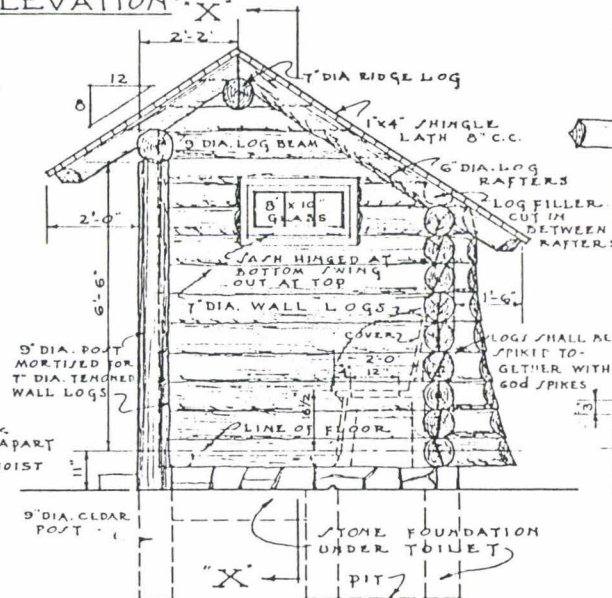
FRONT ELEVATION X



SECTION X-X

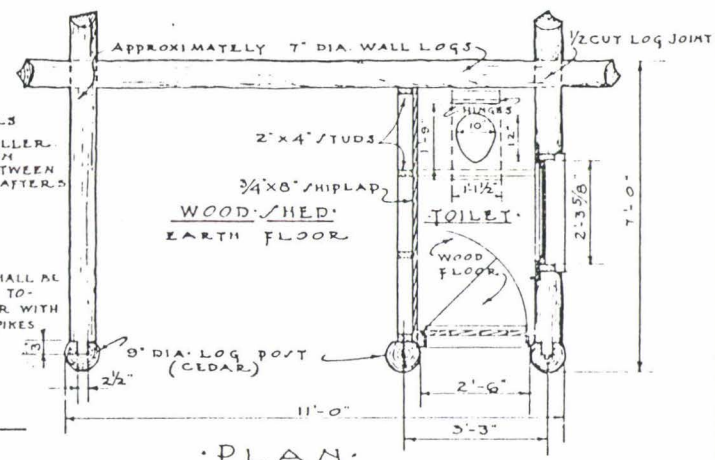


NOTE - ALL JOINTS SHALL BE CUT TO FIT
AND SHALL BE SECURED BY GOD SPIKES.



RIGHT END ELEVATION X

LEFT END SIMILAR EXCEPT OMIT WINDOW.



PLAN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
HIGH COUNTRY CABIN
TOILET & WOOD SHED

DESIGNED C.B.M. & L.C.M. DRAWN L.C.M.
CHECKED R.D.A. & L.C.M. TRACED L.T.D.
APPROVED R.M.F. DATE 1/14/35

Regional Forester

SHEET 3 OF 6 Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

White Mountain
National Forest

RFD 1, Box 94
Conway, NH 03818

Reply to: 1950 Forest Service NEPA Process

Date:

Subject: Backcountry Cabin Management

To: Interested Publics

For the past 40 years the WMNF has maintained six backcountry cabins for public use. Problems with litter, increased maintenance costs due to vandalism and physical deterioration, and changes in the way recreationists use the structures required us to question what we should do with them in the future. We have decided to make an environmental analysis to help us answer this question and would like your help in doing so.

The cabins to be studied are as follows:

- Kinsman Cabin - Located in Easton near the Mt. Kinsman Trail approximately 1½ miles from NH Route 116. Ammonoosuc Ranger District.
- Cabot Cabin - Located in Lancaster near the Cabot Trail just below the summit of Mt. Cabot. Androscoggin Ranger District.
- Jim Liberty Cabin - Located on the south slope of Mt. Chocorua near the junction of the Liberty Trail and the Hammond Trail. Saco Ranger District.
- Black Mtn. Cabin - Located in Jackson approximately 2 miles from the Carter Notch Road on the Black Mtn. Ski Trail. Saco Ranger District.
- Doublehead Cabin - Located in Jackson between the summits of North and South Doublehead along the Doublehead Trail, approximately 2 miles from the Dundee Road. Saco Ranger District.
- Mountain Pond Cabin - Located in Chatham near the Mountain Pond Trail approximately 1 mile from the Slippery Brook Road. Saco Ranger District.

Following is some background information:

1. Most of the cabins were built by the CCC approximately 40 years ago. They were built in an era when public use of the Forest was only a fraction of what it is today and lightweight backpacking equipment was unheard of. The cabins provided overnight shelter in the backcountry without the necessity of packing a heavy canvas tent.



2. The "carry in-carry out" system of litter control has not been accepted by the cabin users to the same degree as by other backcountry users. The cabins appear to attract a high percentage of drinking parties. Vandalism is high compared to other facilities.

3. Maintenance costs for the cabins are high. The Forest spends an average of \$.90 per recreation visitor day of cabin use. In comparison, the average cost for backcountry shelter use is \$.38 per recreation visitor day and the average cost for all camping is \$.29 per recreation visitor day.

We have tentatively identified the following alternatives for consideration:

1. Remove the cabins.
2. Increase maintenance of the cabins to an acceptable level.
3. Replace the cabins with a different type of facility such as shelters or tent platforms.
4. Obtain cooperator maintenance of Forest Service owned cabins by placing them under special use permit.

I would appreciate your considering this problem and giving me your thoughts on such things as the issues and opportunities, evaluation criteria to be used in judging alternatives, alternatives we have not listed, and the effects of implementing the alternatives. I would appreciate it if you would send me your comments by December 15, 1981 at the following address:

District Ranger
Saco Ranger District
P.O. Box 94
Conway, NH 03818

Thank you for your assistance.



STEPHEN A. PARSONS
District Ranger

WHITE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST NEW HAMPSHIRE-MAINE

1970

Scale
1/4" = 1 mile
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Miles
Contour Interval 100 Feet

- LEGEND**
- 93 Interstate Highway
 - 5 U. S. Highway
 - 10 State Highway
 - 34 Forest Route
 - Appalachian Trail
 - Railroad
 - Landing Field
 - Road
 - Road
 - change
- Recreation Site, Forest Service With Camping Facilities
 - Recreation Site, Forest Service Without Camping Facilities
 - Recreation Site, State With Camping Facilities
 - Recreation Site, State Without Camping Facilities
 - Winter Sports Area
 - Point of Interest
 - Trail Hut or Cabin
 - Trail Shelter
 - Population of Cities and Towns 00-999 < 1000 and over
 - *3670 Spot Elevation in Feet
 - Supervisor's Headquarters, Laconia, N. H.

